

Wake Up!

Revelation 3:2-3

Thought for the Day: In order to overcome spiritual lethargy in our lives, we must stop being careless and complacent about the things of God. We must intentionally and consistently pursue the spiritual disciplines of the Christian life on a daily basis.

In verse 1, Jesus condemned the church in Sardis because it had a reputation of being spiritually alive when, in fact, it was spiritually dead—it was completely ineffective and utterly useless in terms of glorifying God and advancing His kingdom. Consequently, in verses 2-3, Jesus exhorted the church to immediately take five remedial steps or face His disciplinary judgment. Here is the Lord’s formula for spiritual revival, both corporate and individual.

I. The Greeting (3:1a)

1 And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.

II. The Condemnation (3:1b)

I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead.

III. The Exhortation (3:2-3a)

➤ Five clearly stated commands for spiritual revival, corporate or personal:

2 Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God.

- Ironically, “The main religion in the city was the worship of Artemis, one of the ‘nature cults’ that built on the idea of reincarnation.” (*Wiersbe, Be Victorious, p. 47*)
- This church, being dead, needed to come back to life—it needed to experience a spiritual reincarnation.

A. Wake up.

- Lit., “keep on being watchful.” To be vigilant, be alert, be watchful: Get with the program!
- Remember, the city of Sardis, though nearly invincible, had twice fallen to its enemies because those guarding the city had fallen asleep.
- To wake up here means to stop being careless and complacent and start paying attention to the things of God.

B. Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God.

- As we get older physically, we experience diminishing physical capacity. We can never fully regain what we have lost.
- But spiritually, we can “strengthen what remains and is about to die” and thus experience a significantly improved spiritual quality of life. (2 Cor. 4:16-18)
- If you have fallen asleep spiritually, take hope! God has not given up on you. He has works for you to complete.

- Unlike our physical life, spiritually we can continue to grow and get stronger throughout our entire life. Even though we have failed miserably, our spiritual life can be the best it has ever been, if we pursue spiritual revival by means of the Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life (*Donald S. Whitney*).
- Bible Intake, Prayer, Worship, Fellowship, Evangelism, Serving, Stewardship, Fasting, Journaling, Learning.

C. 3 Remember, then, what you received and heard.

- “Like the church at Ephesus (2:1-7), this one is exhorted to remember what they had received and heard in the first days of their Christian experience (cf. Heb. 10:32; Gal. 5:7).” (*Ryrie, Revelation, p. 41*)
- What had they received? The Gospel, the gift of eternal life, the truth of God’s Word, the power of the Holy Spirit, the gift of faith, prayer, God’s love, grace, mercy and forgiveness, spiritual gifting, fellowship with the saints, and much more!

D. Keep it...

- Live in obedience to the Word of God; put it into practice in our daily lives.
- “Merely reading and hearing God’s Word isn’t enough. We must let it transform us. We must be as committed to *obedience* as we are to *orthodoxy*.” (*Swindoll, Revelation, p. 66*)
- Obedience is the key to spiritual growth. Obedience is the way we exercise and strengthen our spiritual muscles. Identify and take the next step of obedience.

E. ...and repent.

- Repentance is a change of thinking that produces a change of behavior.
- “Half measures avail nothing” (*Alcoholics Anonymous*). You either completely give up alcohol, or alcohol will completely kill you.
- We either quit our sin completely, or our sin will completely destroy us.

IV. The Warning (3:3b)

If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.

- A sharp warning of disciplinary judgment from the Lord. (Matthew 24:42-51)
- The expectation of the Lord’s imminent return motivates us to turn away from sin. Satan knows this; this is why he does everything he can to convince believers not to be looking and living in light of Christ’s soon return.